

Message Text

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15

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CU-05 SCCT-02 AID-20 OMB-01 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-11 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04

RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20 USIA-15 DRC-01 OPR-02 SY-04

/125 W

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R 210518Z SEP 74

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6939

INFO AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

AMEMBASSY RANGOON

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI

AMCONSUL UDORN

AMCONSUL SONGKHLA

CINCPAC HONOLULU

13TH AIR FORCR"IN CLARK AB

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 15209

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PINT, TH

SUBJECT: STUDENTS ATTACK CONSTITUTION III

REF: A) BANGKOK 15190

B) BANGKOK 15107

SUMMARY

1. STUDENTS AND OTHER YOUNG POLITICAL ACTIVISTS APPARENTLY
INTEND TO CONTINUE TO DELIVER SPEECHES AT THE DEMOCRACY
MONUMENT AND THE PHRAMAINE GROUNDS THROUGHOUT THE WEEKEND.
VIOLENCE HAS NOT BROKEN OUT AND NOW SEEMS LESS LIKELY A

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POSSIBILITY THAN WAS THE CASE IN THE EARLY AFTERNOON ON

20 SEPTEMBER. STUDENTS NOW APPEAR DIVIDED ON THEIR PROTEST AIMS. ASSEMBLYMEN SUPPORTING THE STUDENT DEMAND FOR AN 18 YEAR OLD VOTING AGE CAUTION THE STUDENTS AGAINST VIOLENCE AND PROPOSE TO TRY AND AMEND THE CONSTITUTION.

2. THE NATION ON 21 SEPTEMBER 1974 CARRIES SEVERAL REPORTS THAT VOCATIONAL STUDENTS LED BY PINIT CHINDASLIP FORMER SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE NATIONAL VOCATIONAL STUDENTS CENTER OF THAILAND (NVSCT) HELD A COUNTER DEMONSTRATION AT THE PHRAMAINE GROUNDS. SPEAKERS THERE CHARGED THE STUDENTS AT THE DEMOCRACY MONUMENT LED BY NATIONAL STUDENTS CENTER OF THAILAND (NSCT) WITH TRYING TO CAUSE TROUBLE IN THE COUNTRY. THEY CLAIMED THAT VOCATIONAL STUDENTS HAD BEEN USED BY OTHER GROUPS IN THE PAST BUT WOULD BE FOOLED NO LONGER.

3. MANY ASSEMBLYMEN, INCLUDING DR. KRASAE CHANAWONG (LEADER OF THE NEW FORCE PARTY), DR. KAMON SOMWICHEN (CHULALONGKORN PROFESSOR), AND DR. PUAI UNGPHAKON ALL HAVE COME OUT IN FAVOR OF THE 18 YEAR OLD VOTING AGE. THEY CAUTION THE STUDENTS, HOWEVER, AGAINST VIOLENCE AND RECOMMEND THAT NORMAL PROCEDURES FOR CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT BE FOLLOWED. ONE OF THEIR OPTIONS IS TO PASS AND PROMULGATE THE CONSTITUTION ON 8 OCTOBER 1975 AND THEN AMEND IT DURING THE 120 DAY PERIOD PRIOR TO THE NATIONAL ELECTIONS SCHEDULED FOR 1 FEBRUARY 1975. MAJOR THAI LANGUAGE PAPERS ECHO THE SENTIMENTS EXPRESSED IN EDITORIALS IN BOTH THE NATION AND THE BANGKOK POST ON 21 SEPTEMBER THAT URGE STUDENTS TO "PLAY BY THE RULES OF THE GAME". HAVING MISSED THEIR OPPORTUNITY TO CAMPAIGN FOR THEIR FORMER DEMANDS SIX WEEKS AGO, THE PAPERS (AND ASSEMBLYMEN) POINT OUT THAT IT IS NOW UNREASONABLE FOR STUDENTS TO THREATEN TO DESTROY OR DELAY EVERYTHING THE ASSEMBLY AND THAI PEOPLE HAVE WORKED FOR OVER THE PAST YEAR.

4. COMMENT

WE EXPECT THE STUDENTS TO CONTINUE WITH HYDE PARK RALLIES UNTIL MEANS ARE FOUND TO MEET AT LEAST THEIR
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DEMANDS FOR THE LOWER VOTING AND CANDIDACY AGES ARE MET. AT THIS WRITING THE MOST LIKELY OUTCOME APPEARS TO BE THAT THE ASSEMBLY WILL AMEND THE CONSTITUTION IN THESE AREAS BEFORE ELECTIONS SCHEDULED FOR 1 FEBRUARY 1975. HOPEFULLY, THE REPORTED SPLITS BETWEEN VOCATIONAL STUDENTS AND UNIVERSITY STUDENTS WILL NOT LEAD TO VIOLENT CONFRONTATIONS, THOUGH THIS REMAINS AT LEAST A POSSIBILITY.
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